

**MICHIGAN CHILD CARE & DEVELOPMENT FUND GRANT
PROGRAM FOR THREE-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN
NARRATIVE SUMMARY REPORT, 2001-2002
December 9, 2002**

Background Information

The Michigan Department of Education, through a cooperative interagency agreement with the Family Independence Agency, provided grants in FY 2002 to child caring agencies to deliver services for low-income three-year-old children through the Child Care and Development Fund Grant Program. A total of 367 low-income children have received services through this grant during the 2001-2002 funding year.

The following information is based on the Michigan Child Care and Development Fund Grant for Three-Year-Old Children Narrative Summary Report (2001-2002) as submitted by the individual projects.

Project Sites

Sixteen non-profit agencies through a competitive application process were awarded \$960,000 to serve a total of 320 three-year-old children. The following agencies were awarded grants: BHK Child Development Board, Bay Area Family Y, Belding Area Schools, Children's Outreach, Eastern Michigan University Children's Institute, Grand Rapids Community College, Jackson Child Care Center, Leelanau Children's Center, Michigan Child Care Centers, Mt. Pleasant Public Schools, Oakland Family Services, Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency, Perry Nursery School, River Rouge School District, Starlight Academy, and Wayne State University. All of the projects offer center-based programs.

Student Information

A total of 367 three-year-old children were enrolled in the programs, with 320 of the children funded by the Michigan Child Care and Development Fund Grant Program for Three-Year-Old Children. Information provided in this report is based on a total number of 367 children as reported by the programs. The program allocation per child was \$3,000 for 2001-2002.

Number of children served:

Total number of different children actually enrolled	367
Total number of funded children	320

All programs reported the family income guidelines:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Number</u>
Head Start (poverty level)	114
Free Lunch	144
Reduced Lunch	74
Unified Child Care	<u>35</u>
TOTAL	367

Transition from Three-Year-Old Program

Each of the funded programs provided wraparound child care. Parents were not required to enroll in the additional services.

The programs reported the following transitions of children enrolled:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Number</u>
Michigan School Readiness Program	237
Head Start program	46
Community preschool program	8
Special Education program for preprimary children	2
A year at home	3
Don't know or left program	66
Other	<u>6</u>
TOTAL	362*

*These figures reflect transitions for some of the children who left the program before the end of the year and whose funded slot was refilled.

Additionally, programs reported on the number of children who were able to access child care in the setting to which they transitioned.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Number</u>
BHK Child Development Board	0
Bay Area Y	25
Belding Area Schools	7
Children's Outreach	0
EMU Children's Institute	6
Grand Rapids Community College	7
Jackson Child Care Center	9
Leelanau Children's Center	5
Michigan Child Care Centers	34
Mt. Pleasant Public Schools	8
Oakland Family Services	13
OLHSA	22
Perry Nursery School	26
River Rouge School District	18
Starlight Academy	16
Wayne State University	<u>19</u>
TOTAL	215

Waiting List of Eligible Children

As was the case in the Mid-Year, programs were asked to report if eligible children were not able to access services and were placed on a waiting list. The table below shows that by the end of the program year, 80 eligible children were reported to be waiting for these services. Programs maintaining a waiting list:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Waiting List</u>	<u>Number</u>
BHK Child Development Board	no	
Bay Area Y	yes	5
Belding Area Schools	no	
Children's Outreach	yes	7
EMU Children's Institute	no	
Grand Rapids Community College	no	
Jackson Child Care Center	no	
Leelanau Children's Center	yes	3
Michigan Child Care Centers	yes	32
Mt. Pleasant Public Schools	no	
Oakland Family Services	yes	5
OLHSA	yes	2
Perry Nursery School	no	
River Rouge School District	no	
Starlight Academy	yes	4
Wayne State University	yes	<u>22</u>
TOTAL		80

Programs Involved Parents in the Following Parent Involvement Activities:

- ◆ Attendance on Advisory Committees (at least one parent representative)
- ◆ Three required staff/parent contacts (home visits, conferences, other parent activity)
- ◆ Workshops on various topics:
 - Discipline, nutrition, safety, child development, parenting, transitioning to kindergarten
- ◆ Parent/Child activities
 - Field trips, family fun nights, family picnics, play groups, open house, work days
- ◆ Additional parental/family participation:
 - Newsletters, orientation, volunteerism, observing, evaluation, conference attendance, training, parent education classes and groups.

Evaluation Plan

Child Outcomes:

For the Narrative Summary report, programs were asked to describe the method of assessing the individual development of the children in the program and the assessment instruments used. Seventy five percent, or 12 of the 16 programs, reported using the High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR). Many of these 12 programs reported using additional methods of assessment such as collecting portfolios with samples of children's work, anecdotal notes, screening tools such as the Denver, and developmental checklists. Two other programs (13 percent) reported using other types of on-going comprehensive assessment tools: the Work Sampling checklist and the Creative Curriculum Child Development Assessment. The final two programs did not use an observational on-going assessment tool. One reported using a locally developed three-scale checklist, and the other reported the use of a combination of the Brigance screening instrument (issued pre- and post-) and anecdotal notes.

In this section, programs were also asked to report on the gains made by children and highlight results. All programs reported that the children they served made gains in development. Areas of development they measured included: language and literacy, social and emotional, logic and mathematics, fine and gross motor, self-control, self-discipline, and purposeful play. Below is a sample of evaluative statements made by programs about gains in child growth and development:

One hundred percent of children demonstrated positive gains in all developmental areas.

General results include: Attention span increased. Fine motor skills have increased including cutting and managing small manipulatives more effectively. Gross motor development increases are demonstrated in their climbing and swinging abilities. Social development has improved language and the ability to refrain from violence as the first course of action. Music and movement have increased skills in keeping the rhythm and following directions. Literacy advances include a love for books, and the fact that children enjoy "reading" books to each other and adults.

All children showed improvement during the year. The children scored an average of 4.0 on their assessments.

Improved language skills always help increase social skills and here the scores increased on the average of 1.13. All children formed friendships and attempted verbal ways of dealing with conflict. Initiative skills as well showed a large increase from the beginning to end of the school year.

Initial math scores were very low. Every math experience seemed to be new to most of the class. Six children rote-counted to four or less. In the end, all of the children rote-counted to ten and nine children rote-counted over ten. One learning-disabled child who only counted to three in September was observed counting to 30 in April!

All children grew in skills and abilities across developmental areas. Three children who were non-English speaking in the beginning of the school year made tremendous progress in language development and related social and play skills.

By May 2002, there was a 30 percent improvement in cognitive skills and a 25 percent improvement in self-help and school skills.

Children in the FIRST program increased their development by the end of the program year in areas of initiative (+.327), social relations (+.330), creative representation(+.357), music and movement (+.331), language and literacy (+.262), and logic and mathematics (+.320).

Program Quality:

For the 2001-2002 year, the following eight programs, which represents 50 percent of the programs, received on-site visits from Early Childhood and Parenting Programs' consultant staff: Belding Area Schools, Children's Outreach, Eastern Michigan University Children's Institute, Jackson Child Care Center, Mt. Pleasant Public Schools, River Rouge School District, Starlight Academy, and Wayne State University.

Four programs receiving on-site monitoring visits were found to be of high quality when measured by the High/Scope *Program Quality Assessment* (PQA), as administered by Early Childhood and Parenting Programs consultant staff (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 1998). High quality programs measure 4.25 to 5.0 on a 5-point scale:

Belding Area Schools	4.29
EMU Children's Institute	4.60
River Rouge School District	4.54
Wayne State University	4.70

Four programs were found to be of medium quality, as administered by Early Childhood and Parenting Programs consultant staff. Medium quality programs measure 3.0 to 4.25 on a 5-point scale (Early Returns First Year Report on MSRP Evaluation, 1997).

Children's Outreach	3.90
Jackson Child Care Center	4.10
Mt. Pleasant Public Schools	3.30
Starlight Academy	3.40

These eight programs were asked to describe how they used the PQA results to enhance program quality. The following comments were reflected in the Narrative Summaries by some of the programs that received monitoring visits:

The results were reviewed by the staff and director. All material was shared and reviewed. We immediately implemented the suggestions made by Michigan Department of Education staff.

The results of the PQA were helpful in some areas but were inconsistent with the verbal assessments during the exit interview. Some of the ratings, we felt, were more subjective than quantitative. We are following the PQA, Michigan Department of Education guidelines, and NAEYC accreditation procedures more closely.

As a result of our evaluation, we are putting in place the following improvement plans: improved filing system, increased labeling, improved room arrangement, improved diversity involvement, improved display of child-initiated work, improved child assessment documentation, improved parent connection documentation, classroom schedule improvement, and additional staff training in the following areas: language and print-rich environment, adult-child interaction, conflict resolution, and child initiated activity opportunities.

Programs who did not receive an on-site visit reported on improvements they made to program implementation as a result of using the PQA internally:

As a result of using the PQA we made the following changes to enhance our program: new equipment and materials, home visits scheduled for earlier in the program year, changes in the daily schedule, modifications in room arrangement, and plans for more staff training on conflict resolution and social development.

We used the PQA to target areas to enhance in the classroom and skills to develop as a staff. We looked at the way our materials are displayed and organized in the classroom. We planned some of our staff trainings around problem solving. We strategized ways to get parents more involved in the program and increase attendance at conferences.

Staff rearranged some physical areas that gave better flow to the classroom. More print was added to the room with areas labeled.

Staff visited and observed in each other's classrooms and completed the PQA. Each staff person used PQA comments to frame their final evaluation. PQA comments that were not teacher or classroom specific came to our weekly staff meetings or Board committee for review.

Results from the PQA helped achieve the following goals: 1) new playground installed for younger preschool children; 2) staff attended more trainings; 3) classroom organization improved; 4) parent interaction was improved; and 5) parent involvement increased.

The program had a goal of scoring above 4.10 for sections A and B of Curriculum Planning and Assessment. The PQA score was 4.16. PQA scores for Daily Routine averaged 4.24 for our two sites and 4.39 for Adult/Child Interaction.

Program Commitment and Capacity

Programs were asked to report on their plans to continue the Three-Year-Old Program. Despite the fact that this grant will not be renewed for the 2002-2003 fiscal year, 12 programs indicated their commitment to continuing to serve three-year-old children and their families in the community.

We continue to offer full-day preschool programming for children 2 ½-6 years of age. GRCC is committed to the support of the lab preschool (Grand Rapids Community College).

Most of those programs described using FIA reimbursements and tuition payments to cover the cost of preschool for families.

Although funding for the 2002-2003 year is not available, our three-year-old program has been incorporated into four of our child care centers. Full and part day options are available for families. FIA child care payments assist parents with tuition costs (Michigan Child Care Centers).

If room is available, we will enroll tuition children to accompany the PPI children in their program. The tuition-based three-year-old program may have openings, and spaces will be made available. Transportation to daycare homes or centers will be provided (Belding Area Schools).

Tuition-based half-day program, full-day wrap-around care, and assistance to get FIA child care subsidy (Wayne State University).

The school district has continued the three-year-old preschool program as well as provided care for Head Start half-day children. The site offers an extended day component from 6:30 am to 6:15 pm. Our program is tuition-based with 60 percent FIA families and 40 percent tuition based paid for by parents. We run full- and half-day programs (River Rouge School District).

We are continuing our three-year-old program with the same capacity (16 children). Currently we do not have another funding source to offset the cost for parents. However, we refer parents to FIA for the child care reimbursement. Also, we keep our hourly rate low (\$2.75 an hour) so that parents can still afford a quality program for their three-year-old children (Oakland Family Services).

We accept children with FIA reimbursements and refer others to Head Start or Kids Konnections at Ferndale Schools (OLHSA).

In addition to FIA and tuition reimbursements, one program indicated that they used the Child Care Network as an additional resource with low-income families.

We have made our three-year-old program available for a fee based on the families' income. A sliding scale is available. We also refer families to FIA and accept FIA payments for low-income families. We also refer families to Child Care Network for assistance if they do not qualify for FIA (Jackson Child Care Center).

Two programs mentioned the availability of scholarships as an additional resource for assisting low-income families.

The three-year-old preschool program has been discontinued but we will continue to service three-year-old children to our full capacity. Our child care program for three to five year olds has the same components as the three-year-old preschool and MSRP programs for four year olds. There is a fee for our child care, but we do accept FIA and we also offer scholarships to families who are unable to pay. This year we are servicing 226 families (Bay Area Family Y).

We continue to enroll three year olds in our program. For those who have financial difficulties, we refer them to the financial aid office on campus (for EMU students), Child Care Network, FIA, and we do have two "in house" scholarship opportunities for families (EMU Children's Institute).

Despite their efforts to continue services, two programs describe the challenges for programs and families as a result of the discontinuation of funds.

Perry Nursery School will continue to provide a high-quality affordable program for approximately 30 three-year-old at risk children in the coming year. The loss of the Three-Year-Old and Full-Day Services grants has been a devastating blow to our program. The loss of a total of \$200,000 represents 22 percent of our annual budget. Perry has made some drastic changes in order to cut costs and bring in more revenue to sustain our program. Our staff did not receive any kind of wage increase this year and may not next year as well. This will make it even harder to retain qualified staff in an increasingly difficult job market. We were forced to increase tuition rates for parents. This was a painful decision that has far reaching repercussions for many of our families. Perry has also made a decision to increase our teacher:child ratio to 1:8. Previously, our ratio was 1:7. Even though the new ratio is in line with the Michigan Department of Education guidelines, we do not feel it is in the best interest of at-risk children. Our teacher's workload has increased with no reasonable expectation of just compensation (Perry Nursery School).

It is very unfortunate that the program was not funded this year. Many parents prefer that their younger children are cared for in a smaller environment rather than being bussed across town to large warehousing organizations. This can be very frightening and overwhelming to two- and three-year old children. The program is dedicated to serving as many three year olds as possible with the funds available. The parents are currently paying for the program and some are subsidized by FIA (Starlight Academy).

Three programs indicated that they are in the process of securing funding to continue programming.

We are still seeking sponsors and/or grants to subsidize parents of three year olds. Currently, three year olds are being enrolled in the fall with parents paying the larger portion. We will probably have a reduced number of three year olds (Children's Outreach).

Funding was lost. BHK plans to research other grants to support the growing need for quality child care activities for children and families served (BHK).

We have contacted a number of regional foundations and have alerted our Human Services Collaborative body to the problem. We will be able to meet the needs of some families via local funding, but probably not all (Leelanau Children's Center).

One program indicated that they did not have the capacity to continue serving three-year-old children without the assistance of the Three-Year-Old Preschool Program grant.

After being informed of the funding loss we hoped to continue the program, however, it was decided this would not be financially possible. We are a community education building and are only able to sustain ourselves through several grants given to us by the State of Michigan. Our funding has also been in jeopardy in regard to our adult programs and we felt this program was a risk we could not take in order to keep our building in a financially sound situation (Mt. Pleasant Public Schools).